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THE CONGO FREE STATE AND CONGO BELGE

By Frederick Starr, of the University of Chicago

To depict "the present day conditions" of most African colonies would not involve sketching their history or probing into their past. In the case of *Congo Belge*, however, it is necessary to do so. To understand any statement relative to it, demands some acquaintance with the Congo Free State which lies behind. Permit me to briefly recall its more salient features.

How little was known of the great rivers of Africa only thirty-five years ago! The source of the Nile, long sought, was still in dispute; while part of the course of the Niger was known, its mouth had been sought in vain; the mouth of the Congo had been known since 1485, almost three hundred years, but practically explorers had mounted the mighty stream no farther than Isangila, in the lower cataracts region, the point reached in 1816 by the ill-fated expedition under Captain Tuckey.

In 1871, Livingstone, the great missionary explorer, had disappeared and the uneasy outside world had despatched an expedition under Stanley to discover his fate. The veteran had made his way from the east coast northward into the heart of the continent, discovering Lake Moëro and exploring Lake Bangwelo and the southern end of Lake Tanganika. At Nyangwe he had seen the great Lualaba flowing northward. Stanley overtook him at Ujiji on November 10th. The old man was not particularly delighted at the encounter; he had as soon pursued his important explorations alone. But together they explored the northern end of Tanganika and together they queried about the mysterious north-flowing river. To Livingstone it was a fascinating problem; he believed it could only be the Nile.

They separated and Stanley returned to tell the world how he found Livingstone. They never met again; before Stanley returned to the interior of the dark continent the old man had passed away. The mystery of the north-flowing river remained, and to the solution of that mystery Stanley's expedition of 1874 was devoted. He entered Africa from Bagomoyo on the east coast, November 17th. He penetrated again to the region of the Great Lakes, discovered Lake Albert Edward, circumnavigated Tanganika and, in November, 1876, with the famous Arab, Tippu Tib, he left Nyangwe with canoes and paddlers determined to solve the mystery of the Lualaba by the certain method of following the great stream to its mouth. Long it flowed northward but, to his surprise, turned abruptly to the west; it could not then be the Nile. Steadily moving westward, latitude suggested that the unknown river might be the Niger; but another sudden change in direction, this time to the southwest, rendered this conjecture unlikely. Only as he neared the end of his long journey did he realize that his river was the Congo. He has himself told the story of his expedition, one of the most remarkable in the history of geographical exploration. He reached Boma, near the Congo mouth, August 9, 1877.

After Stanley had disappeared in the dark continent and while he was exploring the Lake region and negotiating with Tippu Tib, an important event took place in Europe. Leopold II, king of the Belgians, had long been interested in travel and exploration. In 1876 he invited a Geographical Conference at Brussels. To it were bidden well known geographers from various countries and particularly men who had made explorations in Africa or who had especially studied that continent. The session occupied three days in September, was held at the palace, and was presided over by the king. Its avowed purpose was to encourage the exploration and opening up of the heart of Africa to the world. In opening the conference the king said:

To open to civilization the only portion of our globe to which it has not yet penetrated, to pierce the darkness which envelopes

entire populations, this is, I venture to say, a crusade worthy of this century of progress, and I am happy to observe how much public sentiment is favorable to its accomplishment; the current is with us.

Of gentlemen among those who have studied Africa, a considerable number have been led to think that there would be advantage, for the common end which they pursue, in assembling and conferring together with the purpose of arranging procedure, of combining efforts, of drawing upon all resources, of avoiding duplication.

In this conference establishment of stations, from which expeditions should explore the unknown portions of Africa, was discussed—as also the organization of such expeditions. The *Association internationale africaine*, commonly known as the A. I. A., was established and the king was elected president of its executive committee. The nations participating in the conference were urged to form national committees, which should divide the field between them and undertake definite expeditions. Belgium acted promptly in the matter; its committee was organized in November, 1876, and a first expedition was despatched the following year. Other nations were less active. France showed a lively interest, Germany less; most did nothing. Before the plan was abandoned Belgium sent out six expeditions, more than all other countries combined.

But with the appearance of Stanley at the mouth of the Congo a new aspect was put upon matters. Leopold, with the quick shrewdness so characteristic of him, at once saw that the great river gave the natural entrance into the continent; that Banana and Boma, not Zanzibar and Bagomoyo, were the proper stations from which to operate. When Stanley, returning in triumph, reached Marseilles, two messengers from the king met him for the purpose of engaging his assistance in a great scheme which the monarch had evolved to gain control of the whole Congo area by the founding of stations and the securing of treaties from the native chiefs. In boldness and originality, the scheme was unsurpassed by any enterprise of the nineteenth century. For the purpose of carrying it through, a society was founded in Belgium, November 25, 1878, under the name of the

Comité d'études du Haut-Congo. The king was its honorary president; three honorary vice-presidents of the A. I. A. were honorary members. Engaged by this society, C. E. H.-C., Stanley returned to Africa and undertook that remarkable work, which he himself has described in two volumes upon *The Congo and the Founding of its Free State*. He made treaties with chief after chief, founded a string of stations from Boma to Stanley Falls, organized, developed, took possession. Five years were devoted to the work. But the condition was anomalous. Could a committee of studies have rights of domain and sovereignty? Could it make valid treaties? In 1883 the committee was reorganized and its name changed to the *Association Internationale du Congo*—A. I. C. It adopted a flag, engaged an administrator-general, and assumed the position of an actual governmental organization. Wauters says of it:

Thus five years had sufficed to make the most brilliant expedition to the center of the continent, to peacefully visit a hundred new populations, to secure from native chiefs more than five hundred treaties of sovereignty, to found forty establishments, to place upon the upper river, above the cataracts, five steamers, to occupy the country from the coast to Stanley Falls, from Bangala to Luluabourg! Diplomatic Europe could not remain an indifferent spectator of so audacious an enterprise, already crowned with so great success.

Of course it was the Portuguese who, in 1485, discovered the mouth of the Congo and who early penetrated at least to the lower cataracts. They made a more or less effective occupation. In the Sixteenth Century they had establishments at San Antonio (Sogno) and at San Salvador in the old kingdom of Congo. Their missionaries had labored for the conversion of the heathen natives. In 1597, Clement VIII had created a bishopric for the religious administration of the region. This chapter of Congo history is interesting and deserves full recognition. But in 1608 San Salvador was abandoned and the power it represented was transferred to Saint Paul de Loanda, and in 1627 San Antonio was deserted. In 1640, mission work was again begun; but enthusiasm was never fully rekindled; the sec-

ond period of apostolic labor never equalled the earlier; it left some interesting narratives of effort, but presently the flame flickered, then died; in 1717 the work of evangelism ceased. Then, through a period of one hundred and sixty years, up to the time when Stanley undertook his work of organization, Portugal made no assertion of claims to the Congo. Through all the series of events which we have sketched, Great Britain had taken little part. She was represented in the geographical conference of 1876; she was invited to form her national committee and send out expeditions; while Belgium had equipped and despatched six expeditions, France two and Germany one, she had done nothing. But she looked with doubtful eye upon Leopold and his schemes and at this juncture made a move which threatened to checkmate him. In December, 1882, the Portuguese asserted their sovereign rights over the Coast from 8° to $5^{\circ} 12'$ south latitude and inland to Isangila, in the cataracts region. February 26, 1884, a convention was arranged between Great Britain and Portugal whereby Portuguese rights to both banks of the Congo as far up as Nokki were recognized by Great Britain and she was given trade privileges. By this convention, the promoters of the Congo enterprise held but doubtful value. Without a port, without free connection with the sea and unhampered movement, the upper Congo was worse than useless.

There was another question facing the association. The national Committee of France had not been idle. De Brazza, sent out by this Committee, had raced with Stanley to reach Stanley Pool at the head of the lower cataracts. He arrived there first and, pursuing the Belgian methods, had made a treaty with the native chief and received cessions of land and power. To his feat the Congo Française of to-day is due. The north side of Stanley Pool, after much discussion, was recognized as French; the south side belonged to the A. I. C. Brazzaville and Leopoldville face each other across the great pool.

On April 10, 1884, the United States recognized the sovereignty of the A. I. C.—the first actual recognition by

an outside power; a week later Bismarck, who favored the founding of a true state, invited France to join Germany in calling a conference at Berlin for the consideration and adjustment of African affairs; a week later France entered into a convention with the A. I. C. whereby its sovereign rights were recognized, but in case the sovereignty it claimed should lapse, the territory over which it held should go to France, by virtue of de Brazza's treaty; on November 3d, Germany recognized the sovereignty of the A. I. C. Thus three nations—the United States, France, and Germany—had actually given the A. I. C. official recognition.

To return to the Portuguese-British convention. By May, 1884, Portugal had perfected her plan of organization of a province of Congo, to be established with Cabinda as a seat of administration. On June 23d Bismarck announced his approval of the to-be-formed Congo State and warned Great Britain that Germany could not approve the Portuguese-British convention, which was denounced three days later by Great Britain.

Then came the Berlin conference. It met November 15, 1884, and remained in session until February 26, 1885. It considered and settled many important points relative to trade and development in Africa. So far as concerns the Congo, its regulations regarding commerce were general and apply as well to French, German, English and Portuguese areas within the Congo basin as to the A. I. C. or the Congo Free State. The Berlin conference neither established nor recognized the Free State. There were fourteen nations represented in its membership. Three of these had already recognized the sovereignty of the A. I. C.; during the period of the conference the other eleven were solicited to do the same, and one after another acceded to the solicitation until, before the close of the conference, all the states represented had given their recognition. Britain's recognition was given on December 16th. On February 23d, 1885, in the Conference a manifestation in honor of Leopold II took place and he was congratulated upon the successful issue of his efforts. After the conference closed the king asked permission from the Belgian Parliament to

assume the sovereignty of the Congo Free State, which was granted by the Chamber of Representatives on April 28th, by the senate on the 30th. On August 1st the king sent out an announcement to the powers that the International Association of the Congo had transferred all its rights and powers to the Congo Free State, of which he was Sovereign-King.

The new state now entered upon a career of remarkable development. It occupied a unique position in the world. It did not belong to Belgium, but was the absolute property of the king; Leopold II was not its ruler *as* king of the Belgians; he was at once two persons—King of the Belgians and King-Sovereign of the Congo Free State. It is not our intention to trace the development of the next twenty years. We will only state that a governmental organization was perfected, the old stations of the A. I. C. were strengthened and new stations founded, a military force of native blacks was created, some railway was built, a fleet of steamers was brought into existence, a commerce was developed which made Antwerp the greatest ivory market and the second rubber market of the world. There is no question that, as a business venture, King Leopold's new state has paid. As natural in a private business, economy of conducting and magnitude of return were the two most important questions. With no home country to sustain it and make good its deficits, depending upon the private purse of its owner, it had to pay from the start. These conditions dictated a quite different policy from that of an ordinary colony. Not future development upon foundations slowly raised, but immediate returns were important. The collecting of natural products, representing large value in small bulk and little weight, was the quickest method of securing these. Ivory, rubber, copal—these and almost these alone were available. To secure this exploitation certain peculiar features grew up. While at first private initiative in enterprise was encouraged, a new régime was inaugurated in 1891. The area of the State was divided into three classes of land:

- (a) The lands actually held in possession by natives.
- (b) The remaining lands, the state domain.

(c) Certain lands distinctly set apart as the *domain of the crown*; this was equal in area to one half of France; it was the area richest in rubber. The natives were established in their rights to the lands they occupied; all products of the state domain belonged to the state; all products of the *domaine de la couronne* were the absolute property of King Leopold himself. He owed and made account to no one. Taxes were levied, and, in lieu of cash payment, were collected in service—gathering of rubber and other products, furnishing of food-supplies, portage and work on public enterprises. In conducting the exploitation, concession companies were organized and, to save expense and for convenience, their agents were given some degree of governmental authority and power of coercion. It is impossible to even enumerate the many other details of administration. In those mentioned many chances of abuse and maladministration are evident.

It was not long before complaints were heard; they became numerous and varied. Foreign interests asserted discrimination and monopoly of opportunity; it was claimed that customs dues charged for necessary state revenues were against the principles of the Berlin conference; the system of taxation was criticized as involving forced labor and practical slavery; acts of injustice and cruelty, including horrible atrocities upon the persons of unfortunate blacks, were alleged. August 8, 1903, Great Britain submitted a diplomatic note to the powers signatory to the Berlin Act inviting intervention in the Congo question. One nation only, out of the fourteen, made favorable response—Turkey. The agitation, however, continued; first in England, then in America, organized Congo Reform Associations by printed matter and public meetings brought a strong pressure to bear upon the two governments to intervene. At least in part on account of this agitation, King Leopold, on July 23, 1904, appointed an International Commission of Investigation, vested with full powers, to visit the Congo Free State, to inspect, interrogate, examine the real conditions and to make report. The personnel of the commission gave general satisfaction. It consisted of Edmond Janssens,

advocate-general of the Belgian court of cassation, Baron Nisco, president of the court of appeals at Boma, and de Schuhmacher, federal councillor of Switzerland. The commission made a careful investigation extending through five months; their report was printed in September, 1905. It was a remarkable document. It was not a whitewash; it found defects, errors, wrongs, abuses; but it is doubtful whether any colony in Africa, after equally searching investigation, could have emerged in better shape. The commission recommended the appointment of a committee of reforms to act upon its findings and suggestions; this committee, consisting of fourteen men, prominent in law and colonial science, was appointed and as a result of its study a list of twenty-five decrees instituting reforms was issued in June, 1906.

It is said that Leopold II, while still Duke of Brabant, on returning from an eastern journey in 1860, gave Frere-Orban a stone from an Athenian temple upon which he had had the words *Il faut à la Belgique des colonies* engraved. It is certain that for many years he looked upon the Congo Free State as a Belgian colony-to-be. While, through its early days, he actually met all its expenses, he had at times to invoke the interest of Belgium in his enterprise. At the founding of the Free State, Belgium had to give the king permission to become its *king-sovereign*; two years later, in 1887, when the State was seeking its first loan, its bonds could be issued in Belgium only with the authorization of the Belgian government; again, when the Congo Railway was undertaken, the Belgian government subscribed 10,000,000 francs in 1889 (and 5,000,000 more in 1896); in 1890 Belgium granted 30,000 francs for the exploring expedition of Captain Delporte. In these various ways Belgium had become actually interested and involved in Congo affairs. On July 9, 1890, two significant documents were presented to the Belgium Chamber of Representatives—a letter from the king dated August 5, 1889, and his will, dated August 2, 1889. In his letter, after having indicated the importance of colonies to manufacturing and commercial nations like Belgium, the king said: “these patriotic preoccupations have dominated

my life; they are what have determined the creation of the African work." He depicted the value of the Congo State and expressed the hope that it would prove altogether to the advantage and profit of Belgium; that he hoped that Belgium would take it over as a colony; that until his death he would direct and sustain the enterprise, unless Belgium should elect to assume its administration before that event. In the will the king transferred all his sovereign rights in the Congo Free State to Belgium upon his death. These documents were in the hands of Beerneart, chief of the cabinet, almost a year before they were presented to the Chamber. In connection with their presentation, Belgium was asked to loan the state the sum of 25,000,000 francs; this loan was granted July 25th. By this transaction not only did the wishes of the king become clearly and publicly known, but Belgium herself became practically committed to his plan. In the convention arranged, it was stipulated that the sum of the loan should be supplied in annual instalments through a period of ten years and that six months after the expiration of that time Belgium might elect to immediately take over the state. In 1895, the Congo government finding itself in need of funds, the question of its immediate taking over became the subject of excited discussion, but the step was not taken. When, in 1901, at the expiration of ten years and six months, the subject was again under consideration, action was postponed, though the law of August 10th conserved Belgium's rights. After the report of the Commission of Investigation and the appointment of the Committee on Reforms, the king issued an important letter, dated June 3, 1906, in which he summarized the whole of his Congo work, discussed his rights, defended his policies and acts and brought up the question of annexation for the third time. The matter was earnestly discussed through a period of more than a year; a special parliamentary committee of seventeen members was appointed by the Chamber of Representatives to thoroughly consider details; its report, made in December, 1907, led to the consideration of a treaty of cession offered by the king. By it the sovereign power, lands and other properties, privileges, rights and obliga-

tions—all were transferred, with certain specified reservations. These reservations practically retained the famous *domaine de la couronne* in the king's hands. They were vigorously resisted by the *Committee of Seventeen* and became the subject of special further discussion. Finally, the king yielded and in return for his actual relinquishing of the crown domain Belgium agreed:

to respect certain specified concessions to companies and missions within the *domaine de la couronne*; to pay 60,000 francs to certain catholic missions; to pay a civil list of 120,000 francs to Prince Albert until his accession to the throne; to pay 75,000 francs a year to the Princess Clementine until her marriage; to carry through certain public improvements not to cost more than 45,000,000,000 francs; to create a crown fund of 50,000,000 francs for schools, hospitals, missions and scientific investigation; to permit to him during his life the use of certain palaces bought in the name of the *domaine* and of a farm for the experimental raising of cocoa and coffee.

After much discussion, on September 9, 1908, the annexation was passed and on November 15th, the *Congo Free State* became *Belgian Congo*.

Belgium faces her new responsibilities with firmness and courage. For the administration of her colony a government has been organized consisting of a colonial minister, responsible to Parliament, and a colonial council of fourteen members, of whom eight are appointed by the crown and six are selected by Parliament. The finances are under parliamentary control, and a budget must be submitted for approval each year. In connection with the presentation of the budget a report is demanded in which Parliament is to be informed regarding the political, economic, financial and moral condition of the colony. The budget and report, printed as a government document, is the standard source of information upon colonial affairs. From this document for the current year, a clear idea of the present movement is gained. Two facts stand out conspicuously in the policy pursued. 1. The nation is in serious earnest in carrying out the reforms that have been suggested for the welfare and improvement of the native population. 2. Without abandoning the effort to gain all possible benefit from already existent valuable natural products, Belgium is wisely look-

ing toward the development of agriculture, the settlement of permanent colonists and the encouragement of new and definite sources of production. Some details may be mentioned.

Minister Renkin has himself made an extended journey through the colony, examining conditions with care and gaining, in the field itself, ideas as to the needs. Keenly sensitive to the accusations which have been so widely made as to maltreatment of natives, he says formally: ". . . solemnly attests that the accusations of cruelty or oppression formulated against the Belgian colonial administration are contrary to truth. As concerns the condition of the natives, *Congo Belge* perfectly sustains comparison with no matter what neighboring colony." Most of the changes in administration are directly made to the end of improving the situation of the natives and giving encouragement to freer commercial activity. Thus, the government abolishes the old system of gathering the natural products of the public lands. To prevent confusion and loss through too abrupt an application of the new policy the public lands will be successively opened to free private exploitation. In the map here displayed the areas to be opened are tinted in three colors; the area colored in bistre is to be opened to such exploitation after July 1, 1910; that in striped green, after July 1, 1911; that in rose, after July 1, 1912. Within these areas, after the dates mentioned, natives have the right to collect rubber and copal on their own account and to sell them freely to private traders. Within these areas, too, land will be rented or sold for the establishing of trading-posts. The importance of these measures for the development of wholesome commerce is evident.

The taxation imposed upon the natives may be paid in money, food supplies, or products. As yet there is no coined money in a large part of the colony. Serious effort is being made to extend its introduction and use and the time is probably not distant when the regular payment of taxes may be made in cash. In the past there has been much criticism of "forced labor." In portage and in the con-

struction of railways and other public works, the state has had to have the services of great numbers of blacks; the men have often been taken far from home and detained for unreasonably long periods. It is still necessary to use many laborers for such work, and in some cases they must be taken to a considerable distance. During 1909, for instance, 2575 men were employed in the construction of the Great Lakes Railway and of the automobile roads in the Uele region. The present administration demands that such workers be voluntary recruits, that they be taken from as near the location of the work as possible, that they shall be taken for a period of not more than three years and that they be paid the ordinary wages of the region and in cash. This last regulation as to *cash* payment cannot yet be actually carried out in all places.

The railway policy of the Congo Free State was notable for economy and practicality. With the exception of a short line running back from Boma, which has hardly justified its construction, not an unnecessary mile of road has been laid. Nature has supplied highway in the great river-system, perhaps the most remarkable on the globe. The Congo is navigable for ocean steamers for one hundred miles to Matadi at the foot of the lower cataracts, a series of rapids and cascades which extends for about two hundred miles; above this interruption is a stretch of fourteen hundred miles, navigable to Stanleyville (Stanley Falls), in the heart of the continent, for steamers of 400 to 500 tons; the second series of rapids extends almost one hundred miles to Ponthierville, where another navigable stretch of several hundred miles is navigable to Kindu; here again an interruption occurs, but beyond Kongolo steamers may again be used. If this were all, the opportunity for commercial development would be great. But the Congo has many great tributaries and these in turn have navigable branches. This network of streams furnishes at least eight thousand miles of steamer course and renders penetration to the whole interior easy. There is no point within the area of the state which is not within easy reach of a stream upon which transport is possible. Recognizing this fact

the state government realized that the actual necessary railroad mileage was small; short lines around rapids, to put navigable river reaches into connection was all. Two such lines were constructed: the *Congo Railway*, about two hundred and fifty miles in length, from Matadi to Leopoldville, around the lower cataracts; and the *Great Lakes Railway*, some seventy-five miles long, from Stanleyville to Ponthierville, around the second cataracts. These two lines rendered traffic possible from the Congo mouth to Kindu. The Colonial government continues this shrewd policy. Two more short lines are now in construction or authorized. One, perhaps two hundred miles long, extending from Kindu to Kongolo, will overcome the third interruption in the Congo-Lualaba proper and will open the last usable stretch of its water. This development of the entire river has been forced by the need of an outlet from the Katanga mining region, one of the world's great copper areas, which lies to the west of the upper Congo-Lualaba. The second line authorized will extend from this same Katanga district westward toward Lusambo and the Sankuru river. It will follow the shortest practicable line and will bring the great Sankuru-Kasai waterway into use for ore shipment. Compared with the line of the Congo proper it will save an enormous distance and repeated handling of the freight. It is, however, in line with the old policy of taking advantage of all that nature has done.

Congo Belge has undoubtedly vast mineral resources. The wonderful Katanga district has been operated for some time. It will soon have *four* outlets for its product. The Rhodesian railroads, pushing up from the south, have already reached Broken Hill almost at the Congo Belge border; the Belgian government has authorized the building of a line from Elizabethville, in the Katanga district, to Broken Hill. The Portuguese are to construct a line from the west African coast, through Portuguese possession, straight to Katanga; it will be a long line, expensive to build and maintain. With its completion Katanga ores may go out by the Congo-Lualaba, the Sankuru-Kasai, the Rhodesian or the Portuguese route. Just now a new mining region of apparently

great promise is being opened in the extreme northeast—the Kilo region, near Lake Albert. It is reserved by the government, which in 1909 worked 1400 men there. It is expected to yield a handsome and steady income to the colony. There is always great and special danger of abuses in the working of mines and it is to be hoped that Belgium in conducting this enterprise will jealously guard the rights and comforts of the workmen. While Katanga and Kilo are resources of enormous potentiality, no one imagines for a moment that they constitute the whole mineral wealth of the country.

In the matter of land tenure, Congo Belge has largely reversed the old policy. Now for the first time the government encourages a free immigration and offers to sell or rent lands for agricultural purposes. Much of the country is not adapted to occupancy by white men; there are, however, considerable areas, as in Katanga and the upper Kasai district, where whites can no doubt build up flourishing communities.

The future of the rubber industry is a serious problem. The rubber exported from the Congo during the last twenty-five years has been wild rubber. In the gathering of it, trees and vines have been destroyed. The supply of wild rubber is not inexhaustable and the end is in sight. The danger has long been recognized, and under the old régime the companies were required to plant and cultivate a specified number of vines or trees, dependent upon the amount of wild rubber taken out. It was believed that these plantations, state property, would come to yielding before the wild rubber was exhausted. The results have proved disappointing; as yet no productive rubber plantations are there. In some cases the companies neglected their duty in the matter; at best the whole business was an experiment and facts had to be learned through failure and bitter experience. *Landolphia* (a vine) was the best natural producer and the first plantations were of it; it appears to be a failure under cultivation. The native *Funtumia* (a tree) seems to be the best plant for cultivation. The famous Brazilian *Hevea* appears to flourish in the Congo area; so much has been

learned. The policy of the government is to release companies and agents from developing plantations and to collect a fixed tax upon all rubber exported. This tax will amount to 0.40 franc a kilo. for tree and vine rubber, 0.20 franc a kilo. for grass rubber. The money resulting from this tax will be used by the government itself in planting 2000 hectares a year to *Funtumia* and *Hevea*, 300 trees to a hectare. The planting is to be conducted upon this scale through a period of ten years. The old plantations are not believed to be entire failures and some income is to be expected from them. The combined income from old and new plantations is expected to largely aid the colonial government, while at the same time a permanent and reliable industry will be developed.

From many other interesting matters relative to the conditions and policy of Congo Belge, we select but two more for mention—the fight against sleeping sickness and the schools. Everyone knows something of the frightful ravages of the mysterious sleeping sickness. At first believed to be confined to blacks and restricted within a limited area, it is now known to affect whites also and has developed over an enormous district. It has devastated whole regions, depopulated important towns, annihilated promising mission stations. Leopold II showed a lively interest in combatting it. In 1903 he lent moral and financial assistance to the expedition sent out by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine to investigate the disease; in 1906 he presented that school 125,000 francs; during his administration a credit of 300,000 francs was established for study of the disease and a prize of 200,000 francs was offered for the discovery of a cure. The new government intends to prosecute a vigorous campaign. It has utilized the discoveries already made in treating the early stages of the disease; it has adopted preventive measures for its circumscription; it is liberally spending money in increasing the force of physicians, in introducing hygienic improvement and in establishing new hospitals.

The old government was often and severely arraigned for its failure to develop schools; the new administration is launching a definite school policy. The speaker feels that

among ourselves the school idea had become a fetich; that under present conditions in the African lands the establishment of many schools is *not* a crying need. In the Congo both Protestant and Catholic missions have established schools, which are naturally and easily conducted at a minimum expense in connection with their religious work. They appear to me quite adequate to meet the present need. But government schools are now to be established on quite a liberal scale at all the more important centres. Their conduct is to be in the hands of the *Brethren of the Christian Doctrine*. Book-learning is to be associated with industrial and practical training. The avowed purpose is to prepare trained helpers for governmental, railway and commercial enterprises. It is an entirely legitimate end and there is some demand for such helpers. At the famous mission school at Wathen in the lower cataract districts, we were told that boys trained there were in demand for such positions at fair pay. It is a question whether such mission schools cannot for some time to come meet all the demand for such helpers.

In December last, King Leopold II, originator of the Congo enterprise, died. The new king Albert, is deeply interested in the colony. As Prince of Flanders, in 1909, he made a journey through Congo Belge, entering at the east side and traversing the whole colony; it was a hard and trying trip. His letters, printed in Belgian papers, were much read. He has seen the country, the peoples, the problems, for himself; he is, with perhaps one exception, the most democratic of European kings; he is a man of heart and ideas. His interest in Congo natives is genuine, as already shown in his efforts in the fight against sleeping sickness and in plans for the elevation of the blacks. Under his administration, it is reasonable to expect every effort will be made to render Congo Belge a happy and prosperous colony.